A MENDER OF HEARTS

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HV2345
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cop. 1
Young Scotland, c.1
Jan. 1927

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A Dramatic Sketch in the Days of Abraham Lincoln

(The scene of the sketch is a plainly furnished room, where President Lincoln sits at a table writing. Papers lie in bundles in front of him, while on the wall hangs a large map of the United States. On a low stool, and leaning against the side of his chair, sits his eleven-year-old son, "Tad." The boy, who has always had a difficulty in utterance, talks slowly and haltingly. "Papa day," is his frequent form of address to his father.)

TAD. Papa day, isn't it time for my story now? Your pen has gone scratch, scratch over three whole pages, and I haven't whispered a word.

LINCOLN. Well, Tad, it's good of you to sit so quiet with your war-worn old father.

TAD. But you're not fighting, Papa.

(LINCOLN *smiles, then sighs heavily.*)

LINCOLN. No, not fighting with gun or sword, but fighting with heart and brain, and doing a long waiting game. Guess I'm like old Nigger Nimrod's uncle down Kentucky way. He was mighty slow, and rested two hours for every ten minutes that he worked. One day Nimrod gave his gate-post a fresh coat of paint. His old uncle came up when it was finished, and leant against it for one of his long rests. "De paint, de paint!" cries Nimrod. Old uncle blinked at him and said, "You're allus a-castin' up my disinkilnation for labour, and now that I've got a post I'm a-going to let you and de whole neighbahood see how I'll stick to it." I've got a post to stick to as well, Tad, and it's hard and heavy work sometimes; but listen, who's that?

(A girl's voice is heard singing outside the window.)

SONG

'Way down south by de Shenandoah,
Live de friends I love and know ah,—
Sun, and dew, and starry daughter
In de Land of Singing Water.
Old Brer Trouble comes no more
Knocking on de cabin door;
Though my feet will Northward sally,
Hid my heart deep in de valley.
'Way down,—'way down,—
In de sunny smiling land.

(LINCOLN *rises and opens the window.*)

LINCOLN. Well done. No one but a Virginian could sing so tenderly of her own land.

(A shabbily dressed young girl and an old Negro are standing on the balcony. When LINCOLN *speaks the girl steps eagerly forward out of the gathering gloom into the light streaming from the open window.)*

THE GIRL. I am a Virginian, Mr. President. My name is Virginia Randolph, and I have come a long and difficult journey to see you on a matter of life and death. Please do not send me away. I tried to get admittance by the front door; but the servants said that you were engaged all the afternoon, and they would not let me in. I heard that you liked the old Plantation Songs, and I thought that I would try to catch your attention by singing outside the window of the room where you do your writing. Please give me a few moments.

LINCOLN. So good a singer deserves a hearing.

VIRGINIA. They say that broken hearts give forth the sweetest music, and mine is very nigh the breaking.

LINCOLN. Come in and tell me your trouble.

(VIRGINIA *steps in through the window, and the old Negro follows her.*)

VIRGINIA. My servant Jim may come too? He has looked after me all through the journey.

JIM. Yes, Sah, I've minded Miss Ginny since she was so high. I ain't persooming, Sah; but I'd like to tell how my Miss Ginny came here most part on foot, and working her way every step. Look at her faded dress and her wooden shoes. It was not like dis that Miss Ginny went a-visiting in de old days. She was de Belle of Richmond, and had her coach and her scores of silk and satins; but now dar's nothing in de larders and de money is all spent; but no hardship daunts her and no cruelty of de ranting Yankees breaks her spirit.

VIRGINIA. Hush, Jim. The President will not wish to hear about the sufferings of the South.

LINCOLN. You are wrong there, Miss Virginia. Every blow struck at the South has left a wound in my heart. Her burden of misery bows me down daily with a fresh load of care.

VIRGINIA. Then speak and let her have the independence for which she has poured out her blood and treasure.

LINCOLN. Nay, that would be a poor service to her. It is because I have her best interests at heart that I cannot do what you suggest.

VIRGINIA. It is a hard question, and I should not waste time in discussing it. I have come here to plead, Mr. President, not to argue, to throw myself on your mercy, and not to cross swords with your reason. My father, Colonel Jeff Randolph, is lying in a northern military prison under sentence of death. In two days he is to be shot at dawn.

(LINCOLN *catches his breath sharply and passes his hand across his forehead with a gesture of pain.*)

LINCOLN. Ah! my poor child, so your father is "Fire-eating Jeff," the raider. I feared as much when I heard your name.

VIRGINIA. They have another name for him in the South, Mr. President. They call him "Sir Golden-Heart."

LINCOLN. Yes, I believe it. Your men are many of them chivalrous and daring: your Lees, your

She went off, leaving Jock with a picture of diminutive beauty and freshness that made all the greater impression after his months at the diggings and his solitary trekking. And her voice—he was almost sorry he had suggested that she might call the minister. A few minutes later there was a knock and a tall, slimly built man in an old Norfolk jacket and grey flannels entered with a "Well, you've wakened up at last; that's fine."

Jock looked at the face and liked the man instinctively, for John Neilson was a man in a thousand.

"Nurse Jamieson tells me you want to make one or two arrangements, but you're not to talk much. You'll be thinking about your men. They're a good crowd and they swear by you, which is one of my infallible tests of white men in this country. So I've fed them and given them quarters, and if you like, I'll keep them here and give them work till you're on the move again. I happen to have some work on the station I want done. Some of them know me and they'll agree if you will."

"Thanks awfully; that'll suit me down to the ground. I was beginning to worry about them. They've done awfully well by me."

"Well, you're not to worry, but just get better. Anything else?"

"If you would write to my partner, Philip Trew of Malimala, and tell him about me and give him some idea when I may be about again."

"Right, I'll send him a line. He'll get it just about the time he would normally be expecting you, I suppose."

"Yes, I'm afraid I'll rather let him down. How long will I likely be out of action?"

"Well, it's early yet to say, but I fancy if all goes well you should be on the road again in six weeks or so. You've had a narrow shave; if the lion hadn't been absolutely finished, he'd have done you in. As it was, he'd only strength to scratch feebly, so if there's no poisoning and you're fit, the wounds should heal up all right. Your eye's not damaged at all, which is a mercy. I'm looking forward to hearing all about it. When you're fit to be moved you'll come across to our house. It's lucky the other half of the nurse's house is vacant just now with the other lady worker being on furlough. Now I must be off, but I expect the nurse will allow my wife or myself to come and see you every day. Keep a quiet sough, it's the only thing to do."

The rest of the story almost tells itself. Jock was young and fit, and once he had got over the shock and the inflammation had died down his wounds healed rapidly. Care had to be taken with the head wound, but his eye was uninjured, though a long scar over his right eyebrow showed how narrow his escape had been.

Long before he was able to be shifted to the other house Jock realised that he was hopelessly in love with his dainty nurse, "Rippling Water," as he called her to himself. She seemed, however, so in love with her work as a missionary that the doubt grew strong in his mind that she would not be willing to give it up to become a planter's wife.

In the days that followed Jock of necessity saw and learnt a great deal of what the missionaries were doing, and with knowledge came admiration and respect. One evening he asked advice about his own future. Although he had got to know the minister well and realised he was an exceptional man, he was rather astonished at his reply.

"I wish that you would settle up here and begin planting. I know it may seem strange to you, but I'm beginning to think this country needs other white people besides missionaries. Heaven preserve us from anyone finding gold or anything like that; you know yourself the kind of 'white civilisation' that comes in its train. But the country must be developed agriculturally if the Africans whom we have trained are to have a full and reasonable life. We want other white men to live among these people and help in their uplift, even though they themselves make a good thing out of it financially. But we want real good men—it's character and example that count with the African."

One afternoon when he was quite fit and was to leave the station two days later, Jock and his whilom nurse were taking the regulation walk—something of a ritual it was—to see the last of the sun striking on the rocky peaks to the West. The beauty of the scene moved Jock to tell the story of his first sight of the Lake and how ever since he had felt the North calling. Then he talked of his men and how well they had served him, and how both the minister and the planter had urged him to settle in the North.

"The minister, as a matter of fact, rather put the wind up by saying the country needed men of character, but at least I'm ready to give the natives a square deal and I've learnt so much about the Mission here that I'd be glad to help in any way I could. But I doubt if a planter can really have so much influence as the minister seems to think."

"I rather agree with the minister," she said shortly. "I think the natives want to see men and women living a Christian life who are not missionaries. And it would be something big to live for."

There was a little silence and then Jock broke out impulsively, "It's been a wonderful year this for me in the North. I thought the lion had spoiled it all, but instead he's made it all the more wonderful because . . . of you! I think I've loved you ever since that first moment I was conscious, but I've been afraid to say so. You seem so happy in your life here and I've nothing to offer you but the doubtful joys of a planter's wife."

There was silence again for a moment, then she looked up with a wonderful light in her eyes and said, "But you've offered me yourself . . . and I accept. I hated to think of leaving my work and the people here, but if you're going to settle in the North I think I could risk the 'doubtful joys.'"

THE HAPPY END.

Jacksons, and your Stuarts. That makes it all the harder for us to do our duty; but however difficult our part may be, the Union must be maintained. Listen, Miss Virginia, I speak to you now, not as statesman, but as friend to friend. This sentence wrings my heart; but you must remember that your father was, as I said before, a dangerous raider, and a leader of a desperate band who have long been harassing us at an important strategical position.

VIRGINIA. He has been a faithful servant of the Confederacy.

LINCOLN. That may be; but these words have a treasonable meaning in this part of the States. We have pardoned and pardoned again, and our gentleness has been mistaken for weakness. Now it is too late for us to follow the dictates of our hearts and be content with lenient measures.

VIRGINIA. You mean that my father must die!

(*She clenches her hands and stumbles forward. Her whole frame is shaken by dry tearless sobs.*)

Oh, I cannot bear it! In the heat of battle, in the glory of victory, it would have been anguish and agony enough, but this! this!

(*She gathers herself together for a final effort, and turns almost fiercely on* LINCOLN.)

Look at me, Mr. President, you the guardian of your country's liberties, the avowed champion of the downtrodden, the defender of right and justice, —look at me, and tell me if you can do this thing? What if Jeff Randolph sat in your chair to-night, and you sought mercy at his hands.

LINCOLN. In that case he would act as I am doing now.

VIRGINIA. No, no, he would not. He has ever been merciful to friend and foe alike. Do you know why he was captured so easily? A child had followed the soldiers a half-mile or so, then it grew bewildered and cried to be taken home. What do you think happened, Mr. President? Colonel Jeff, the Southern rebel, the hard-riding desperado, set the little Northern maid on his horse, galloped back with her, and left her with her mother. His men pleaded with him not to risk his life in such a venture; but he laughed and said that he could not bear to see a child cry, were she Confederate or Yankee. He promised to rejoin his friends; but it took some time to find the child's people, and the North men got him as he was coming back.

LINCOLN. Your father acted like a brave Virginian gentleman, and my task of sentence is not an easy one. No one told me that story about the child. Have you seen any of the military men about the matter?

VIRGINIA. General Butler ordered me from his presence. The others were more polite; but none the more reassuring. You, Mr. President, are my only hope.

(*A sound of laughter and gay music is plainly heard from outside.* VIRGINIA *shivers and covers her ears with her hands.*)

Oh! the cruel careless North, if an army laid waste her lands and broke the spirit of her children, she would not laugh and dance as she does now.

(*Ere* LINCOLN *can reply the door handle is hastily turned and a tall woman dressed in old-fashioned country clothes pushes her way in, dragging a young man behind her. A servant stands protesting on the threshold.*)

SERVANT. Come back, come back. Didn't I tell you that the President is engaged.

WOMAN. You go along, young man. Guess I knowed the President a goodish time afore you. Mr. Lincoln, me and my old man heard you a-quizzing Steve Douglas in '58, and what's more, we got a shake o' your hand afterwards. Martha Beech is my name, and I've come from Springfield way. This is my son Timothy.

(LINCOLN, *who is quick to recover from his surprise, rises and shakes hands with* MRS. BEECH.)

LINCOLN. I'm real glad to meet you, Mrs. Beech. Sit down and tell me how are all the friends at Springfield.

MRS. BEECH. Some o' them are well, and some o' them are middling; but it's not that I've come to talk to you about, Mr. President. Will you please to look at this likeness?

(*She takes a photograph out of her bag and hands it to* LINCOLN.)

LINCOLN. A fine figure of a soldier, ma'am.

MRS. BEECH. That's my son as he went to fight for his country. Look at him as he stands here now!

(*She makes a gesture towards the young man who is leaning against the door. His clothes hang loosely on his lank frame, his limbs twitch nervously, while his eyes have a dull, half-awakened look.*)

MRS. BEECH. That's my son that went away the blithest of his company—ready for any bit of fun or fighting. The "Rebs" ketched him and sent him to Andersonville prison. It was a living tomb for him and the rest of our men. They were treated worse nor cattle. He and two others laid plans and got loose, and came back here. This is how his life in Rebel Prison has made him. He ain't fit for work nor play, nor anything in the old life. He just sits and broods and broods and keeps muttering to himself. That's my quarrel with the South, Mr. President, and it's one that won't ever be healed. I'd one boy killed at Fredericksburg, and one at Chancellorsville. That was hard enough, but it was in clean, fair fight; but this is different, this caging of folks and killing their spirits by inches.

LINCOLN. I know how you feel about it. I have heard terrible stories of Andersonville and its horrors. Try not to think of it until this time of struggle and tumult are past. Our loves and hates have all sharp edges in these days. It may be better for your boy's sake if you can forget the sting for a little while.

MRS. BEECH. Forget! I'll neither forget nor forgive. I want to see the South swept bare with the sword. I want to see every Rebel hearthstone broken in pieces. I want to see their mock President down on his knees begging for mercy, and their traitorous generals in chains. I have come to bid you not slacken in the conquest. Drive the armies on and give 'em neither rest by night nor peace by day.

(VIRGINIA, *who has been listening quietly and gazing in a strained, fascinated way at the young soldier* TIMOTHY BEECH, *gives a wailing cry at the last denunciations.*)

VIRGINIA. Oh, no! no! you do not realise what you are saying.

(LINCOLN *turns to* MRS. BEECH *and speaks gently.*)

LINCOLN. This girl is from the South, and her father is under sentence of death.

MRS. BEECH. Many a North soldier would be glad to change with him, I guess, if only to get free of the Southern prisons.

LINCOLN. Still, that does not help her to bear her trouble.

(MRS. BEECH *remains unmoved.*)

MRS. BEECH. Guess nothing helps any of us to bear things in this war.

LINCOLN. Nothing save love and tenderness for those who suffer with us.

(MRS. BEECH *laughs scornfully.*)

MRS. BEECH. Love and tenderness to be sure—like what the South folks show to the lads in Andersonville.

(*As his mother is speaking, the young soldier* TIMOTHY *moves round towards* VIRGINIA *and stares hard into her face. She is at first a little startled by his intent regard; but she stands quietly returning his scrutiny.*)

TIMOTHY. You are like him.

VIRGINIA. Like whom?

TIMOTHY. Like my soldier: him what saved my life, and the lives of the boys that were with me. Jeff—Jeff—oh, I've tried to get his name and it won't come.

(*He strikes his forehead and sighs deeply.*)

MRS. BEECH. He always keeps muttering like that. He's done it since he came back. It's some soldier that did him a good turn, and he keeps worrying over his name. The doctors say it would be the first thing that would help him if he could remember it. Queer thing the mind when it goes chasing round after something like a lost child in a fog. Guess this would be some of his officers.

TIMOTHY. No, it weren't one of my officers. This man I speak of wore a grey uniform. It's coming back to me slowly. She brings it back; she makes me remember.

(*He points to* VIRGINIA.)

VIRGINIA. Tell me about your soldier. Let us try and think together. Did his hair curl crisply on his forehead? Had he a gay, ringing voice?

(*As she is speaking* VIRGINIA *lays a hand on his arm.*)

TIMOTHY. Yes, rich and mellow like a bell. He had a golden kind of smile, too, that shed a lustre on his face. "Sir Golden-Heart," his men called him, and "Jeff the Rover." Oh, if I could only find his name. We'd had a hard, hot day skulking in the brushwood, and keeping clear of Rebs. Two of us got thirsty and we stole out at nightfall. We thought we saw one of our own pickets, and made up to the men to ask for water. Our hearts went into our boots when we heard the Reb Colonel's voice, and saw his grey clothes. He was a bit away from his men, riding alone, and I guess we all looked pretty surprised—him as well as us. We told him our story, and he saw by our faces that we weren't fooling. He was angry about the prison treatment; we all saw that. Then he beckoned us to follow, and he led us by a roundabout way to his tent. He fed us and gave us ointment for our sores, and clean linen. Then he took out his purse and gave us a coin the piece. "My purse is none too heavy these days, gentlemen," he said, "but I owe you much for the treatment you have met with at the hands of my countrymen. Believe me, we soldiers hear nothing of the things which go on in our prisons. Were such facts as you have laid before me generally known, the indignation would be as hot among our men as it is in the North. We Southerns want to meet you cleanly and squarely in battle, and not to starve or bully you in prison. As a proof of this I'm going to let you go free now, though it's all against military regulations. Off with you to the river. You'll soon fall in with some of your friends down there, who have been giving us a hot time with rifle-fire. Remember, if you ever meet a grey-clad soldier in trouble, give him a helping hand for the sake of——" now there's that name again. It won't come.

(VIRGINIA *presses his arm in her excitement, and throws back her head with an air of pride.*)

VIRGINIA. I know, I will tell you. His name is Jeff Randolph.

(TIMOTHY *draws himself up and speaks with a new confidence.*)

TIMOTHY. Yes, yes, that's it. Jeff Randolph—a brave and courteous gentleman. Our comrades told us all about him. They all kind of gloried in him too. They used to see him out among the wounded of both sides in the hottest danger; but none of them would shoot at Golden Jeff. When we got into our own camp a sort of dull blank came over me. I worried and worried after we'd started for home, and I couldn't mind the Colonel's name.

VIRGINIA. He is my father, and they are going to shoot him in two days.

(VIRGINIA *covers her face with her hands and stands in silent agony.*)

MRS. BEECH. Mr. President, guess I want to take back the hard things I said about the South. After all, I seem to owe it a good deal more than I knew. As for the gentleman that did so kindly by

Timothy, can nothing be done to save him? It seems to me that the South would be the better of men like him when the war's over.

LINCOLN. You are right, Mrs. Beech. Your son's story has revealed Colonel Randolph in a new and beautiful light. I shall see that an order is sent for his release on parole. You can get him back home with you, Miss Virginia, and I will depend on you to see that he does no more fighting in this war. You must bring him to see me before you set out, for I would like to shake the hand of so chivalrous a foe.

(MRS. BEECH *takes* VIRGINIA'S *hands in hers.*)

MRS. BEECH. Hear that now, I'm mighty glad with you.

VIRGINIA. If I could only thank you worthily, Mr. President.

LINCOLN. You *can* thank me, Virginia. You can go back to the South and show the people there that we are not out for conquest and bloodshed, but for just and lasting peace. Oh, if I could only join the hands of North and South as both your hands are joined just now. You women are going to be the great healers and rebuilders when this mad fighting is over. I will look to you both, and all others like you, as the hope of the new America —the welders of a firm union which no question of politics can ever dissolve.

VIRGINIA. I promise to do what I can, Mr. President.

MRS. BEECH. And me too. Now we won't be hindering you longer, Mr. President, for I guess time counts for a deal with you. You look nigh worn out, Miss Virginia, with all you've been through. If you and your servant will come along with me and Timothy, we'll be proud and glad to have you. We're staying with a brother of my old man's, a lone bachelor with a big house going to waste for folks to fill it. We're always free to take any friends along, and I guess to-night's talk has made you a close one to us all.

VIRGINIA. I shall be very grateful for your kindness. I have no friends here.

(JIM *the Negro capers in an ecstasy.*)

JIM. Oh, Miss Ginny, I feel all jubilated inside. I 'clare I'm top-heavied over with happiness.

LINCOLN. Poor fellow, his joy is very sincere.

(*He goes to the door and opens it for his visitors, then shakes hands with each as they pass out. The women go first,* MRS. BEECH *leaning on* VIRGINIA'S *arm, while* TIMOTHY *and* JIM *follow.*)

Good-night to you all, and may our next meeting be under a reign of peace and reconstruction.

ALL. Good-night, Mr. President.

(*The door is shut.*)

TAD. Papa day, I'm still here.

LINCOLN. Why, Tad, it's long past your bedtime.

TAD. But I liked being here, Papa. Do you know what I'd like to be?

LINCOLN. No, Tad, I haven't an idea. Last week you wanted to be a 'bus conductor, if I remember rightly.

TAD. But it's something quite different from that. I want to mend things that are broken. That girl said her heart was nearly broken; but you mended it, Papa. I'd like to do that.

(LINCOLN *lays a hand on* TAD'S *shoulder.*)

LINCOLN. Guess you've chosen the best trade of all, my son. See that you stick to it, through thick and thin.

(*His eyes grow dreamy, and he speaks very slowly.*)

A mender of hearts,—a mender of hearts,—that's what I would like said about me when the long hard game is over.

CURTAIN.

BARBARA ROSS M'INTOSH.

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The Editor's Letter-Box

"In the Grip of the Ice-pack"

4 ROYAL CRESCENT, GLASGOW, W.

DEAR SIR—I have been particularly interested in the "Tale of the whaler *Diana* in the Arctic Seas." In my early years as a student in Glasgow University I met a senior medical student named Smith who had returned to the College to finish his course and take his degree. It was a common custom in those days for senior students to take an appointment as a non-qualified medical assistant or to act as a ship's surgeon. Mr. Smith had gone as a doctor in a whaler bound to the Arctic regions in a whaling expedition, and related the same experiences as described by Miss Clouston—long confinement in the ice-pack, intense cold, scarcity of food and fuel, outbreak of scurvy and death of the captain and most of the crew. I was told that the doctor rose above the occasion—not only doing, as far as man could, his duties as physician, but practically navigating and working the ship back to Shetland with what help he could get from the mate, who was a sick man at the time.

This ship's doctor was a hero; and the students, in a friendly way, always spoke of him as "North Pole Smith." I believe that the hero doctor of the *Diana* and "North Pole Smith" are the same person. But I have never heard of him since.

GEORGE HALKET.

[Dr. Halket is right—the story of the *Diana* as told in our last two issues by Maud Clouston is absolute fact, and the ship's surgeon was none other than "North Pole Smith."—ED., *Y.S.*]

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"TIME is what we want most, but we use worst," are words of William Penn, the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania, quoted by Archdeacon Sinclair in his book, *A Young Man's Life.*

A Dragon and some Boy Scouts put out a Fire

The Tale of a Glorious Afternoon in the History of the Scottish Mission School at Ichang on the Yang-tse-Kiang

THE Training Institution in Ichang stands on a hill which is partly a graveyard. This has prevented the Chinese building houses right up to our compound wall, but not far away is a very poor part of Ichang where the houses are built for the greater part of boards and bamboos. The roofs are all thatched with grass. A great cluster of these houses spreads nearly all round the "Nan Hu" or South Lake, and all round one side of the hill on which the school buildings stand.

Fire!

One afternoon during the summer of last year, when it was very hot, a fire started in a

THE BLAZING CITY OF ICHANG
Photo by Dr. A. Graham

little grass house right in the centre of the mass of houses I have described. It was about 1.15 and we had just started afternoon school. Suddenly a pupil sprang to his feet, crying, "There's a fire," and pointed out of the window. I looked round and, sure enough, there was smoke drifting across the play-ground. I went to investigate, and when I got to the gate and looked towards the grass houses, what a sickening sight I saw.

There were hundreds of people running backwards and forwards carrying chairs, tables, boxes, pans, and all kinds of household things, and placing them among the mounds of earth marking the graves that make the graveyard outside the school. Some were carrying old people who could not walk and others were carrying babies. Pigs, fowls, dogs, and cats were running about helter-skelter, and a few ponies kicked to get away from the little boys who tried to hold them with ropes. The whole hill-side was a mass of scurrying people and animals. Just below, on the road beside the lake, two or three houses were in flames and a column of yellow smoke was slowly rising. I saw the flames leap across the narrow road, and in a few seconds the dry grass roofs of three or four houses sent up great tongues of red flames, and the dark-yellow cloud increased in size.

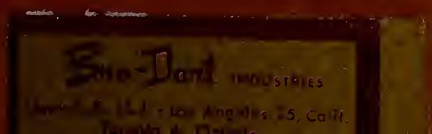
Enter the Boy Scouts

I told the gatekeeper to allow anyone who wanted to place his belongings in safety inside the gate to do so. By the time I reached the school I found the science master, Mr. Tuan had divested himself of his gown and was turning up his sleeves. He came forward and, bowing, suggested that the Boy Scouts might be allowed to go and see if they could help. I willingly agreed and, on a whistle being sounded, the Boy Scouts were all ready stripped of their gowns, and with a smart run they were out of the gate and away down the path, Mr. Tuan and their Scoutmaster with them.

The wind had changed and the fire was creeping up the hill-side towards the school so all the boys got their bedding and boxes ready to be lifted if need be. The elder boys were then sent out to give a hand anywhere they could, and the little boys stood on the verandah watching the progress of the flames. There we could feel the heat of the raging fire but fortunately some men had pulled down a few houses and stopped its advance on this side. On the other sides the fire spread rapidly, and the whole region round the south of the lake was a mass of roaring flames while an immense cloud of smoke rose like a mountain over the city.

Enter the Dragon

Suddenly we heard a great shouting and saw many people running. "The Sui Ling the Sui Ling," the little boys shouted. "The Water Dragon is coming." The street was absolutely choked with people. In the middle of the street were long rows of men pulling on ropes which were attached to a kind of lorry on iron wheels, and mounted on it was a pump with long iron handles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